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Cheryl N. Campbell Director Docket Management & Issue Analysis **Telephone**®

201 E. Fourth St., 102 - 310
P. O. Box 2301

Cincinnati, Ohio 45201-2301 Phone: (513) 397-1210 Fax: (513) 241-9115

July 21, 1994

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Mr. William F. Caton, Acting Secretary Federal Communications Commission 1919 M Street, N.W., Room 222 Washington, D.C. 20554 FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION OFFICE OF SECRETARY

In the Matter of:

Amendment of the Commission's Rules to Establish New Personal Communications Services: and

Implementation of Section 309(j) of the Communications Act - Competitive Bidding

) GEN Docket No. 90-314) RM-7140, RM-7175, RM-7618

PP Docket No. 93-253

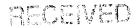
Dear Mr. Caton:

Enclosed please find an original and six copies of the Cincinnati Bell telephone Company's Request For Stay, in the above referenced proceedings.

Please date stamp and return the enclosed duplicate copy of this letter as acknowledgement of its receipt. Questions regarding this document should be directed to Ms. Lynda Breen at the above address or by calling (513) 397-1265.

Sincerely,

Cheyel N. Camparl



JUL 2 1 1994

Before the FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION Washington, D.C. 20554

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION OFFICE OF SECRETARY

In the Matter of)	
Amendment of the Commission's Rules)	GEN Docket No. 90-314
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Services; and)	,
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Implementation of Section 309(j) of)	
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Bidding	j	

REQUEST FOR STAY

FROST & JACOBS

William D. Baskett Thomas E. Taylor Christopher J. Wilson

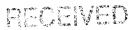
2500 PNC Center 201 East Fifth Street Cincinnati, Ohio 45202 (513) 651-6800

Attorneys for Cincinnati Bell Telephone Company

Dated: July 21, 1994

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Bidding)	

REQUEST FOR STAY

Cincinnati Bell Telephone Company ("CBT"), by its attorneys, hereby requests that the Commission stay the effectiveness of its June 13, 1994 Memorandum Opinion and Order (the "PCS Order") in the Personal Communications Services (PCS) proceeding, or, in the alternative, stay the effectiveness of its Fifth Report and Order (the "Competitive Bidding Order") released July 15, 1994 in the Competitive Bidding proceeding as it relates to the PCS service areas where the Cincinnati SMSA Limited Partnership currently provides cellular service.

In the Matter of Amendment of the Commission's Rules to Establish New Personal Communications Services, GEN Docket No. 90-314, RM-7140, RM-7175, RM-7618, Memorandum Opinion and Order, released June 13, 1994 (the "PCS Order").

In the Matter of Implementation of Section 309(j) of the Communications Act - Implementation of Competitive Bidding, PP Docket No. 93-253, Fifth Report and Order, released July 15, 1994 (the "Competitive Bidding Order").

³ The Cincinnati SMSA Limited Partnership operates a cellular mobile telephone business in the geographic triangle bounded generally by the cities of Cincinnati, Columbus and Dayton, Ohio.

I. SUMMARY

On July 1, 1994 CBT filed a Petition for Review in the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit⁴ challenging the legality of the cellular eligibility restriction affirmed by the Commission in the *PCS Order*. The cellular eligibility restriction prohibits entities holding interests of 20 percent or more in cellular licenses covering 10 percent or more of the population in a given PCS service area from obtaining more than 10 MHz of broadband PCS spectrum in that PCS service area.⁵

CBT, through its affiliate Cincinnati Bell Cellular Systems Company ("CBCS"), currently holds a 45.008 percent interest, as a limited partner, in the Cincinnati SMSA Limited Partnership, which operates a cellular license covering more than 10 percent of the population in the Cincinnati Major Trading Area (MTA). As a result of this minority limited partnership interest, CBT is prohibited from obtaining more than one 10 MHz Basic Trading Area (BTA) license in the Cincinnati area, and is completely ineligible for any of the 30 MHz MTA licenses in the Cincinnati area. The Cincinnati SMSA Limited Partnership is currently the subject of a dissolution proceeding in the Delaware Court of Chancery. Depending on the outcome of that proceeding, the cellular interests which currently make CBT subject to the cellular eligibility restriction may well be liquidated.

The Competitive Bidding Order establishes auction procedures for awarding broadband PCS licenses. While the Competitive Bidding Order does not specify the date

See, <u>Cincinnati Bell Telephone Company v. Federal Communications Commission</u> and the <u>United States of America</u>, Case No. 94-3701, <u>Petition for Review of an Order</u> of the Federal Communications Commission, filed July 1, 1994.

⁵ See, 47 CFR §24.204.

these auctions will begin, it does indicate that the 30 MHz MTA licenses will be auctioned first.⁶ As a result, it seems highly unlikely that either the appeal of the *PCS Order* or the dissolution proceeding will be finally adjudicated before the auction process begins.

Accordingly, CBT hereby requests a stay of broadband PCS auction process (as it relates to the PCS service areas where the Cincinnati SMSA Limited Partnership currently provides cellular service) pending the outcome of CBT's appeal and the Delaware dissolution proceeding.

II. STANDARD FOR GRANT OF STAY

CBT satisfies the test set forth in <u>Virginia Petroleum Jobbers Association v. Federal Power Commission</u>⁷ and <u>Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission v. Holiday Tours, Inc.</u>, ⁸ as to when a stay is warranted. The test requires four factors to be evaluated: (1) the likelihood of the requesting party's success on the merits; (2) the likelihood that irreparable harm to the requesting party will result in the absence of a stay; (3) the absence of harm to other interested parties in the event that the stay is granted; and (4) the extent to which the stay serves the public interest. ⁹ Where consideration of factors two through four favor the grant of a stay, the requesting party must show only that serious questions have

⁶ Competitive Bidding Order at para. 37.

⁷ 259 F.2d 921, 925 (D.C. Cir. 1958) ("Virginia Jobbers").

⁸ 559 F.2d 841 (D.C. Cir. 1977) ("Washington Transit").

⁹ Virginia Jobbers at 925; Washington Transit at 843.

been raised with respect to the merits.¹⁰ An evaluation of the four factors as follows shows that the broadband PCS auctions for the Cincinnati area licenses should be stayed pending the outcome of CBT's appeal of the *PCS Order* and, if necessary, pending dissolution of the Cincinnati SMSA Limited Partnership.

III. LIKELIHOOD OF SUCCESS ON THE MERITS

A. Appeal of the PCS Order

As mentioned above, CBT holds a non-controlling limited partnership interest in the Cincinnati SMSA Limited Partnership (the "Partnership")¹¹ and, therefore, is adversely affected by the cellular eligibility restriction. The Commission's purpose in adopting this eligibility restriction was to reduce the potential for unfair competition by limiting the ability of cellular operators to bid for PCS spectrum in areas where they provide cellular service. ¹² In its appeal of the *PCS Order*, CBT will show that the cellular eligibility restriction needlessly and arbitrarily precludes non-controlling, minority cellular investors like CBT from fully participating in PCS, and does not further the purpose for which the rule was adopted.

Washington Transit at 843.

As a result of this minority limited partnership interest, Section 24.204 prohibits CBT from obtaining more than one 10 MHz BTA license in the Cincinnati area, and renders CBT completely ineligible for any of the 30 MHz MTA licenses in the Cincinnati area. Without this restriction, CBT would be entitled to obtain up to 40 MHz of PCS spectrum in the Cincinnati area.

¹² Second Report and Order, GEN Docket No. 90-314, at para. 105.

Whatever potential anticompetitive problems the Commission is seeking to avoid could only result from *control* of a cellular operation, not from holding a non-controlling, minority interest in such an enterprise. As a limited partner, CBT's investment in the Partnership is purely passive. Under the Partnership Agreement and Delaware law, ¹³ CBT has no right to participate in management and no voting power. Consequently, CBT has no ability to affect the Partnership's operations and no ability to engage in the type of anticompetitive conduct the Commission is trying to avoid through Section 24.204. This is especially true in CBT's case where the general partner (i.e., Ameritech) holds a 52.723 percent interest in the Partnership and, therefore, has total control over the Partnership's operations.

The arbitrary 20 percent standard adopted by the Commission unfairly discriminates against CBT as the holder of a non-controlling, minority interest in the Partnership. It is an arbitrary standard which bears no relationship whatsoever to the actual degree of control exercised by CBT over the Partnership's cellular operations. There is no difference in terms of control between an entity with less than 20 percent ownership and an entity with greater than 20 percent ownership where both are limited partners in a given cellular operation and another entity holds the controlling general partnership interest. This is precisely the situation CBT faces as a result of its limited partnership interest in the Partnership, yet the Commission's arbitrary rule would afford CBT rights that are vastly inferior to those afforded other entities with less than 20 percent ownership.

The Partnership is a Delaware limited partnership and, therefore, is subject to Delaware law.

CBT recognizes that the Commission will likely hold a different view with respect to the merits of CBT's appeal, given that the Commission authored the *PCS Order*. CBT submits, however, that the likelihood of its success on the merits warrants the grant of a stay. In any case, CBT raises serious legal issues which, when considered in conjunction with the likelihood of irreparable harm, the absence of harm to other parties, and the public interest, clearly warrant the granting of a stay.

B. <u>Pending Dissolution Proceeding</u>

In addition to CBT's appeal of the *PCS Order*, CBT has initiated a proceeding in the Delaware Court of Chancery seeking dissolution of the Partnership.¹⁴ The Partnership was formed in 1982 to market, service and operate a cellular mobile telephone business in the geographic triangle bounded generally by the cities of Cincinnati, Columbus and Dayton, Ohio. The respective percentage interests of the general and limited partners in the Partnership as of the date of this request are as follows:

General Partnership Interests

Ameritech Mobile Phone Service of Cincinnati, Inc. 40.000%

Limited Partnership Interests

Ameritech Mobile Phone Service of Cincinnati, Inc.	12.723%
Cincinnati Bell Cellular Systems Company	45.008%
Sprint Cellular Company	1.200%
Champaign Telephone Company	.244%
GIT-Cell, Inc.	.825%

See, <u>Cincinnati Bell Cellular Systems Company v. Ameritech Mobile Phone Service of Cincinnati, Inc., et. al.</u>, Civil Action No. 13389, Court of Chancery, State of Delaware, in and for New Castle County.

The Complaint requests that the Court enter an order dissolving the Partnership, and appointing a liquidating trustee with full power to: (1) collect all money due the Partnership; (2) pay all debts of the Partnership; (3) sell the property and assets of the Partnership, including the sale of the Partnership in its entirety; and (4) distribute any surplus assets to CBCS and the other limited partners ratably according to their respective interests. In the alternative, should the Partnership not be sold in its entirety by the liquidating trustee, the Complaint asks the Court to distribute to CBCS the licenses and assets to provide cellular telephone service in the Cincinnati and surrounding areas pursuant to the terms of the Partnership Agreement.

CBT submits that under Delaware law the Court of Chancery is likely to enter an order dissolving the Partnership. However, at this point it is unclear how the Partnership's assets will be distributed among the partners or what the time frame for such distribution will be.

IV. LIKELIHOOD OF IRREPARABLE HARM

The *Competitive Bidding Order* does not specify the date the broadband PCS auctions will begin. It does, however, indicate that the 30 MHz MTA licenses will be auctioned first. Every indication is that these auctions will begin in the very near future. Thus, it is highly unlikely that CBT's appeal of the *PCS Order*, and the dissolution of the Partnership, will be finally adjudicated before the broadband PCS auctions begin. Consequently, if CBT is prohibited from bidding on any of the 30 MHz licenses in the Cincinnati area as a result of

¹⁵ Competitive Bidding Order at para. 37.

its minority interest in the Partnership and, if the Court of Appeals subsequently strikes down the cellular eligibility restriction, CBT would suffer irreparable harm since its competitors will already have acquired all the 30 MHz MTA licenses available in the Cincinnati area. Similarly, if CBT is prohibited from bidding on any of the 30 MHz licenses in the Cincinnati area as a result of its minority interest in the Partnership and, if the Partnership is subsequently dissolved such that CBT ends up without an attributable interest in the cellular licenses currently operated by the Partnership, CBT will be essentially precluded from participation in both PCS and cellular service. Under these circumstances, the Commission cannot go forward with the Cincinnati area broadband PCS auctions without causing irreparable harm to CBT.

If, due to the timing of the auctions, CBT is precluded from fully participating in PCS, CBT would be placed at a tremendous disadvantage *vis a vis* its competitors. Recent panel discussions conducted by the Commission's PCS Task Force provide an independent basis for this conclusion. Most of the panelists at those discussions agree that demand for PCS, both as a complement to existing wireline telephone service and as a replacement thereof, will grow sharply once PCS is licensed and deployed. For example, the Personal Communications Incorporated Association estimates that PCS subscriptions will reach 8.55 million by the end of the first three years of service deployment and grow by 264 percent between 1998 and 2003. That equates to a market penetration rate of approximately 3.1 percent by the end of the first three years and 10.4 percent by 2003. Similarly, Dr. C. J.

See, Panel No. 1: PCS Demand Predictions - Statement of Thomas A. Stroup, President, Personal Communications Industry Association, at p. 4.

Waylan of GTE Personal Communications Services estimates that by the year 2005 total wireless voice services - including both cellular and PCS - will reach some 30 percent of the population. This translates into a market penetration of approximately 70 percent of U.S. households.¹⁷ As a wireline carrier, CBT would be irreparably harmed if it is denied the opportunity to fully participate in this wireless revolution.

V. ABSENCE OF HARM TO OTHER PARTIES

No other party will be harmed if a stay is granted. A stay would simply preserve the status quo until the Court of Appeals has an opportunity to review the legality of the cellular eligibility restriction and the Partnership is dissolved. Currently, there are no entities licensed to provide broadband PCS. Thus, a stay would not give any party a jump on the competition. No matter what the Court of Appeals decides with respect to the cellular eligibility restriction, or what the Court of Chancery decides with respect to the dissolution proceeding, the Commission can begin the PCS auction process for the Cincinnati area licenses without harm to any other party once those cases have been resolved.

VI. THE PUBLIC INTEREST

The <u>Virginia Jobbers</u> court recognized that the stay of an administrative order raises particular public interest concerns. ¹⁸ The Commission would err in assuming that the public

¹⁷ See, Panel No. 1: PCS Demand Predictions - Prepared Remarks of Dr. C. J. Waylan, GTE Personal Communications Services, at p. 2.

¹⁸ Virginia Jobbers at 924.

interest would best be served by starting the auction process prior to the Court's decision on the legality of the cellular eligibility restriction and prior to dissolution of the Partnership. A stay of the auction process for the Cincinnati area licenses will promote competition by ensuring that eligibility restrictions are as narrow as possible. Allowing CBT to participate in the auctions will increase the number of bidders and, therefore, is likely to increase the revenue generated by the auctions. This is clearly in the public interest since auction revenues will be used to reduce the Federal budget deficit.¹⁹

The Commission has acknowledged the benefits to consumers from permitting local exchange carriers like CBT to participate in PCS.²⁰ CBT has the resources and technological expertise to foster the rapid deployment of PCS in its service territory. Indeed, CBT may represent the best opportunity to bring PCS services rapidly to consumers. Moreover, CBT may well be able to offer a broader range of PCS services at a lower cost than other potential licensees. Failure to grant a stay would unnecessarily restrict CBT's entry into PCS and harm consumers by excluding a viable competitor from the wireless telecommunications marketplace.

In order to remain competitive, CBT must have the same opportunity to provide PCS as cable companies, competitive access providers and other entities. Without the opportunity to fully participate in PCS, CBT may not be able to offer its customers the full range of telecommunications services made possible by the wireless revolution. This would be detrimental not only to CBT, but to the public as well.

¹⁹ See 47 U.S.C. §309(j)(8).

²⁰ Second Report and Order, at para. 126.

VII. CONCLUSION

CBT has raised significant questions regarding the legality of the cellular eligibility

restriction set forth in the PCS Order. CBT has also shown that even if this restriction is

upheld by the Court of Appeals, CBT may still be able to participate in the auctions since its

interest in the Partnership may well be liquidated in the Delaware dissolution proceeding.

These questions should be reviewed and resolved before the broadband PCS auctions begin

for licenses in the Cincinnati area. Only through full and equitable operation of the legal

process can responsible and effective regulation be achieved.

WHEREFORE, good cause having been shown, CBT respectfully requests that the

Commission stay the broadband PCS auction process (as it relates to the PCS service areas

where the Cincinnati SMSA Limited Partnership currently provides cellular service) until

CBT's appeal of the PCS Order and the Delaware dissolution proceeding are resolved.

Respectfully submitted,

FROST & JACOBS

Rv

William D. Baskett

Thomas E. Taylor

Christopher J. Wilson

2500 PNC Center

201 East Fifth Street

Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

(513) 651-6800

Attorneys for Cincinnati Bell

Telephone Company

Dated: July 21, 1994

0119268.01

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Judith A. Grdner, do hereby certify on this 21st day of July, 1994, that I have caused a copy of the foregoing Cincinnati Bell Telephone Copyry's Request For Stay to be mailed, via first class United States Mail, postage paid, to the persons listed on the attached service list.

Judith A. Gardner

Ienry A. Solomon
LUXCEL GROUP, INC.
Iaiey, Bader & Potts
uite 900
350 North Fairfax Drive
ton, VA 22203-1633

Alex J. Lord
AERCURY COMMUNICATIONS, L.C.
36 E. 6400 S.
Alt Lake City, UT 84107

David J. Kaufman
MINORITY PCS COALITION
Frown Nietert & Kaufman, Chtd.
920 N Street, N.W., Suite 660
Washington, D.C. 20036

Philip L. Malet MOTOROLA SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS, INC. 1330 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036

Ja: ... Winston
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
BLACK OWNED BROADCASTERS,
1730 M Street, N.W.
Suite 412
Washington, D.C. 20036

M S. Humphrey
The NATIONAL RURAL TELECOM
Koteen & Naftalin
1150 Connecticut, NW, Suite 1000
Warington, D.C. 20036

Timothy E. Welch MEBTEL, INC. Suite 113 1330 New Hampshire Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036

P. J. Mitchell
MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISES
LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION
FUND, INC.
220 I Street, N.E. Suite 240
Washington, D.C. 20002

GVNW INC./MANAGEMENT 7125 S.W. Hampton Street Suite 100 Tigard, OR 97223

Michael D. Kennedy MOTOROLA, INC. 1350 I Street, N.W., Suite 400 Washington, D.C. 20005

Gene A. Bechtel MW TV, INC. Bechtel & Cole, Chartered Suite 250 1901 L Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036

David E. Weisman
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
BUSINESS AND EDUCAT. RADIO, INC.
4400 Jenifer Street, N.W.
Suite 380
Washington, D.C. 20015

Alden F. Abbott
NATIONAL TELECOMM/INFORMATION
ADMINISTRATION
U.S. Department of Commerce
Room 4713
14th and Constitution Ave, NW.
Washington, D.C. 20230

avid Cosson

A NAL TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE

\SSOCIATION

26 Pennsylvania Ave.,N.W.

\ashington, D.C. 20037

Pavid L. Nace
ACIFIC TELECOM CELLULAR, INC.
ukas, McGowan, Nace &
Futierrez, Chtd.
319 H Street, N.W., 7th Floor
Vas' ton, D.C. 20006

usan E. Ryan AGEMART, INC. aul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison 615 L Street, NW, Suite 1300 Vashington, D.C. 20036

Ferald S. McGowan

ALMER COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

Luk 1cGowan, Nace &

Guillez, Chartered

819 H Street, N.W., 7th Floor

Vashington, D.C. 20006

Richard M. Tettelbaum NC CELLULAR, INC. 400 16th St. NW, Suite 500 Washington, D.C. 20036

Peter Tannewald
RADIO TELECOM AND TECHNOLOGY
INC.
Arent Fox Kintner and Kahn
1050 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036-5339

Prendergast
ROUNY MOUNTAIN TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ASSOCIATION, ET AL
Blooston, Mordkofsky, Jackson
& Tolkens
212 Street, N.W. Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20037

Lisa M. Zaina
THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE
PROTECTION AND ADVANCEMENT
OF SMALL TELEPHONE COMPANIES
21 Dupont Circle, N.W. Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036

Carl W. Northrop PACTEL PAGING & MIDCONTINENT MEDIA 700 13th Street, N.W. Suite 700 Washington, D.C. 20005

Michael Wack PAGING NETWORK, INC. Reed Smith Shaw & McClay 1200 18th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036

John W. Hunter PMN, INC. McNair & Sanford, P.A. 1155 Fifteenth Street Washington, D.C. 20005

Howard M. Liberman PRIMOSPHERE LIMITED PARTNERSHIP Arter & Hadden 1801 K Street, N.W. Suite 400K Washington, D.C. 20006

Daniel S. Goldberg RAM MOBILE DATA USA LIMITED PARTNERSHIP 1229 Nineteenth Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036

Ann K. Newhall RURAL CELLULAR CORPORATION 4800 Norwest Center Minneapolis, MN 55402 /illian J. Franklin
O. R. ONE, INC.
19 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
uite 300
//ashington, D.C. 20006-3404

ECURICOR PMR SYSTEMS LTD. celly, Hunter, Mow & Povich,

C.

C.

Connecticut Ave., N.W.

Connecticut Ave., N.W.

Charles D. Cosson
MALL TELEPHONE COMPANIES
OF LOUISIANA
Traskin & Associates
120 L Street, N.W. Suite 810
Vashington, D.C. 20037

Ellen S. Levine

"UBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF

TH TATE OF CALIFORNIA

505 van Ness Ave., Room 5028

San Francisco, CA 94102

Fimothy A. Hoffman FELEPHONE ASSOC. OF MICHIGAN Brown Nietert & Kaufman, Chtd. 1920 N St., NW Suite 660 Washington, D.C. 20036

Gustave Tappe
IELEPOINT PERSONAL
COMMUNICATIONS, INC.
405 Broad Avenue
Palisades Park, NJ 07650

Tii j E. Welch
THOMB CELLULAR LIMITED
PARTNERSHIP
Suite #113
13.7 ** '2* Hampshire Ave., N.W.
Wa .gton, D.C. 20036

John D. Pellegrim ROBERT LUTZ, ET AL 1140 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Suite 606 Washington, D.C. 20036

Robert H. Kyle SMALL BUSINESS PCS ASSOCIATION 96 Hillbrook Drive Portola Valley, CA 94028

David J. Kaufman SMALL RSA OPERATORS Brown Nietert & Kaufman, Chtd. 1920 N Street, N.W., Suite 660 Washington, D.C. 20036

Michael R. Gardner SUITE 12 GROUP 1150 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Suite 710 Washington, D.C. 20036

George Y. Wheeler TELEPHONE AND DATA SYSTEMS, Koteen & Naftalin 1150 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Suite 1000 Washington, D.C. 20036

Thomas A. Stroup
TELELOCATOR, THE PERSONAL
COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY
ASSOCIATION
1019 19TH Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Stuart F. Feldstein TIME WARNER TELECOMMUNICATIONS Fleischman and Walsh 1400 Sixteenth Street, N.W. Suite 600 Washington, D.C. 20036 ohn D. Pellegrin

I. HAM KYE

140 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.

Suite 606

Washington, D.C. 20036

Robert J. Miller
LCATEL NETWORK SYSTEMS, INC.
Fardere & Wyne, L.L.P.
601 Elm Street, Suite 3000
Dallas, Texas 75201

Julian P. Gehman

AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION, INC.

Blooston, Mordkofsky, Jackson

Dickens

120 L Street, N.W., Suite 300

Washington, D.C. 20037

Wayne Black
AMERICAN PETROLEUM INSTITUTE
Keller and Heckman
10° Street, N.W.
Sun. JO West
Washington, D.C. 20001

Alane C. Weixel ANCHORAGE TELEPHONE UTILITY Covington & Burling 1201 Pennsylvania, Ave., N.W. P.O. Box 7566 Washington, D.C. 20044

John P. Bankson, Jr. ANDREA L. JOHNSON Hopkins & Sutter 888 Sixteenth Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20006

Pa L. Gist
AL..., NCE OF RURAL AREA TELEPHONE
AND CELLULAR SERVICE PROVIDERS
Lukas, McGowan, Nace & Gutierrez
1810 'H Street, N.W., Seventh Floor
W .gton, D.C. 20006

Robert B. Kelly
ADVANCED MOBILE. TECH., INC.
DIGITAL SPREAD SPECTRUM TECH., INC.
Kelly, Hunter, Mow & Povich, P.C.
1133 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Curtis White ALLIANCE FOR FAIRNESS AND VIABLE OPPORTUNITY 1920 L Street, NW Suite 700 Washington, D.C. 20036

Kurt A. Wimmer AMERICAN PERSON COMMUNICATIONS 1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. P.O. Box 7566 Washington, D.C. 20044

Charles N. Andreae, III ANDREAE & ASSOCIATES, INC. 1133 Connecticut Ave., Suite 700 Washington, D.C. 20036

Eliot J. Greemwald JOHN G. ANDRIKOPOULOS, et. al. Fisher, Wayland, Cooper and Leader 1255 23rd Street, N.W. Suite 800 Washington, D.C. 20037

Francine J. Berry
AMERICAN TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH
COMPANY
295 North Maple Avenue
Room 3244J1
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

Frank Michael Panek AMERITECH OPERATING COMPANIES 2000 W. Ameritech Center Dr. Room 4H84 Hoffman Estates, IL 60196-1025 David B. Jeppsen
MERICAN WIRELESS COMMUN. CORPORATION
Let 'ahin & Cate
201 Lew York Ave. NW, Penthouse
Washington, D.C. 20005

William J. Franklin
\SSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT
DESIGNATED ENTITIES
William J. Franklin, Chartered
919 Pennsylvania NW, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20006-3404

Lee J. Tiedrich
ASSOC. FOR MAXIMUM Svc TV, INC.
Covington & Burling
1201 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
P.O. Box 7566
Washington, D.C. 20044

Van R. Boyette P.O. Box 153 Wise River, MT 59762

Peter H. Feinberg
CABLEVISION INDUSTRIES CORP.
COMSAT CORPORATION, et al
Dow, Lohnes & Albertson
1255 23rd Street, N.W., Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20037

Pete, A. Casciato CELLULAR SERVICE, INC. A Professional Corporation 1500 Sansome Street, Suite 201 San Francisco, CA 94111

Riv 'F. Tettelbaum CF. JOMMUNICATIONS CO. DENVER AND EPHRATA TELEPHONE Gurman, Kurtis, Blask & Freedman, 140° ¹6th Street, N.W., Suite 500 W. gton, D.C. 20036 Marilyn Mohrman-Gillis ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA'S PUBLIC TELEVISION STATIONS 1350 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. Suite 200 Washington, D.C. 20036

Thomas J. Keller THE ASSOC. OF AMERICAN RAILROADS Verner, Lipfert, Bernhard, McPherson and Hand, Chartered 901 15th Street, N.W., Suite 700 Washington, D.C. 20005

James H. Barker BELL ATLANTIC PERSONAL COMMUN., INC. Latham & Watkins 1001 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20004-2505

Dennis C. Brown 1835 K Street, N.W. Suite 650 Washington, D.C. 20006

Thomas J. Casey CELLULAR COMMUNICATIONS, INC. Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom 1440 New York Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005

Michael F. Altschul CELLULAR TELECOMM. INDUSTRY ASSOC. Two Lafayette Centre, 3rd Fl 1133 21st Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036

Randall B. Lowe CENCALL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION Jones, day, Reavis & Pogue 1450 G Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005-2088 rthur H. Harding
ENTURY COMMUNICATIONS CORP.

e an and Walsh
400 sixteenth Street, N.W.

iite 600
Tashington, D.C. 20036

homas Gutierrez
OALITION FOR EQUITY IN LICENSING
ukas, McGowan, Nace & Gutierrez
319 H Street, N.W., 7th Floor
/ashington, D.C. 20006

ichard S. Wilensk
OMTECH ASSOCIATES, INC.
Iiddleberg, Riddle & Gianna
323 Bryan Street Suite 1600
Pallas, Texas 75201

Werner K. Hartenberger COX ENTERPRISES, INC. Dow, Lohnes & Albertson 25 d Street, Suite 500 Was. ..gton, D.C. 20037

William J. Franklin
DEVSHA CORPORATION
919 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20006-3404

Shi J. Fujimoto
DOMESTIC AUTOMATION COMPANY
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1001 G Street, N.W.
Suite 500 West
Washington, D.C. 20001

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1301 K Street, N.W.
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Nancy J. Thompson COMSAT MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS 6560 Rock Spring Drive Bethesda, MD 20817

Nancy Douthett CONVERGING INDUSTRIES P.O. Box 6141 Columbia, MD 21045-6141

Thomas Crema 3100 P Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20007

J. Jeffrey Craven DIVERSIFIED CELLULAR COMMUNICATIONS Besozzi, Gavin & Craven 1901 L Street, N.W., Suite 200 Washington, D.C. 20036

Lee L. Selwyn ECONOMICS AND TECHNOLOGY, INC. One Washington Mall Boston, Massachusetts 02108-2617

Margaret M. Charles FIBERSOUTH, INC. Swidler & Berlin, 3000 K Street, N.W. Suite 300 Washington, D.C. 20007 Jeffrey Craven
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es Gavin & Craven
901 L Street, N.W., Suite 200
Vashington, D.C. 20006

Carl W. Northrop GEORGE E. MURRAY OO 13th Street, N.W. uite 700 Vashington, D.C. 20005

Gary M. Epstein
IUGHES COMMUN. GALAXY, INC.
atham & Watkins
uite 1300
001 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

David L. Hill
INDEPENDENT CELLULAR NETWORK, INC.
1919 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Sui'
Was....gton, D.C. 20006

Mark E. Crosby
INDUSTRIAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ASSOCIATION, INC.
1110 N. Glebe Road, Suite 500
Arlington, VA 22201-5720

lames U. Troup IOWA NETWORK SERVICES, INC. 1801 K Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20006

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David F. Gencarelli 1919 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Suite 300 Washington, D.C. 20006

Michael F. Morrone
INDEPENDENT CELLULAR CONSULTANTS
Keller and Heckman
1001 G Street, N.W.
Suite 500 West
Washington, D.C. 20001

Jack Taylor INTERDIGITAL COMM. CORP. 9215 Rancho Drive Elk Grove, CA 95624

Robert B. Kelly
INTELLIGENT VEHICLE-HIGHWAYS
SOCIETY OF AMERICA
1133 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Coleen Egan JAJ CELLULAR Gurman, Kurtis, Blask & Freedman, Chartered 1400 16th St. NW, Suite 500 Washington, D.C. 20036

Linda K. Smith LORAL/QUALCOMM SATELLITE SVC, INC. Crowell & Moring 1001 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20004 ichard S. Becker
R ATES RADIO COMPANY
ecker & Madison, Chartered
115 Eye Street, Northwest
ighth Floor
ton, D.C. 20006

Jeffrey Craven
NIQUE COMMUNICATIONS CONCEPTS
esozzi, Gavin & Craven
901 L Street, N.W., Suite 200
Fashington, D.C. 20036

Effrey L. Sheldon
JTILITIES TELECOMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL
140 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
uite 1140
Vashington, D.C. 20036

Thomas Gutierrez

WENDY C. COLEMAN D/B/A

W CELLULAR

uka, McGowan, Nace & Gutierrez

819 H Street, N.W., 7th Floor

Washington, D.C. 20006

Paul J. Sinderbrand FHE WIRELESS CABLE ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL, INC. 388 Sixteenth St. NW, Suite 610 Washington, D.C. 20006-4103

Michael R. Rickman 7140 Gammwell Drive Cincinnati, Ohio 45230

Laura G. Dooley 1655 Tippecanoe Court Valparaiso, IN 46383 Norman P. Leventhal TRW, INC. Leventhal, Senter & Lerman 2000 K Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20006

Martin T. McCue USTA 900 19th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20006-2105

Paul C. Besozzi VANGUARD CELLULAR SYSTEMS, INC. Besozzi, Gavin & Craven 1901 L Street, N.W., Suite 200 Washington, D.C. 20036

Sheila S. Hollis WINDSONG COMMUNICATIONS, INC. Metzger, Hollis, Gordon & Mortimer 1275 K Street, N.W., Suite 1000 Washington, D.C. 20005

Daniel R. Lindemann 32 Sleepy Hollow Drive Wayne, New Jersey 07470

Steven L. Dickerson Suite 4300 901 Main Street Dallas, Texas 75202

Christopher K. Sandberg FIRSTCOM, INC. 2200 Washington Square 100 Washington Avenue South Minneapolis, MN 55401 Ienry E. Crawford
II PUBLICATIONS, INC.
150 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
uite 900
Vashington, D.C. 20036

Oye Ajayi-Obe 521 Heather Hollow Circle Suite 21 ilver Spring, MD 20904

Thomas Crema 10 P Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20007

David F. Gencarelli 1919 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Sui '0 Was....gton, D.C. 20006 Peter Tannenwald RADIO TELECOM AND TECHNOLOGY INC. Arent Fox Kintner and Kahn 1050 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036-5339

Charles N. Andreae, III 1133 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Suite 700 Washington, D.C. 20036

Abby Dilley 6278 Gentle Lane Alexandria, VA 22310

Ward Leber 18552 MacArthur Blvd. Suite 200 Irvine, CA 92715 William E. Kennard
General Counsel Ofc.
leral Communications Comm.
1919 M Street, NW, Rm 614
Washington, DC 20554

International Transcription Svc. 1919 M Street, NW, Rm 246 Washington, D. C. 20554

Chairman Reed Hundt Federal Communications Comm. 1919 M Street, NW, Rm 814 Washington, DC 20554

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Commissioner Rachelle Chong Federal Communications Comm. 1919 M Street, NW, Rm 832 Washington, DC 20554

Judy Nitsche, Chief Tariff Review Branch, FCC 1919 M Street, NW, Rm 518 Washington, DC 20554

H. Franklin Wright
Frequency Liaison Branch
Federal Communications Comm.
2025 M Street, NW, Rm 7326
Washington, DC 20554

Paul Rodgers, Gen. Counsel NARUC 1102 ICC Building, Box 684 Washington, DC 20044